

This Week in 4th Infantry Division History

by Ceilia Stratton, 4th Inf. Div. museum

15-21 April

WWI: 1918

Orders arrived on April 15 for the Division to move from Camp Green, N.C. to Camp Mills, Long Island, N.Y. and Camp Merritt, N.J. The Division began packing 24,000 pieces of freight; 35,000 pieces of heavy baggage; and 6,000 pieces of light baggage—not counting the hundreds of vehicles. Advance parties for the regiments departed Camp Greene for Camp Merritt and Camp Mills by the end of this week.

WWII: 1945

Throughout the week the division continued to press forward encountering scattered enemy resistance although a clearly defined enemy line could not be identified. The enemy used terrain elements to construct strong points and collected scattered remnants of units to organize a defense. The Division Regimental Combat Teams encountered heavy small arms, automatic weapons, mortar, and artillery fire. Harassing artillery fire continued throughout the hours of darkness. During this week the Division moved through the towns of Steinsfeld, Weiler, Gimmhagen, Rothenburg, Brettheim, Bortenberg, Bainhofen, Wettringen, Jagstzell and Creilsheim.

Vietnam

1967 With the onset of the monsoon season, the Engineers labored to prepare the roads and bridges to withstand the expected flooding. Operation Francis Marion began and would continue to Oct. 11. The 1st and 2nd Brigades, 4th Inf. Div., with the attached 3rd Bde., 25th Inf. Div., mounted guarding operations along the Cambodian border in Pleiku Province against the North Vietnamese army 1st and 10th Divisions. The 1st Bde. covered the area from Duc Co north toward Plei Djereng while the 2nd Bde. worked south of Duc Co through the Ia Drang Valley. This frontier guard duty turned out to be arduous and costly but did stifle NVA attempts to cross large forces into Vietnam through that area during most of 1967.

1968 After a few relatively quiet months, the NVA began attacking firebases with mortars and rockets from Dak To southwest toward the village of Polei Kleng. The NVA were also mining the roads which led to damage to four trucks and one tank. Two Light Observation Helicopters were fired upon causing one to go down with two personnel wounded- in-action.

1969 2nd Bde. was about halfway through Operation Putnam Panther in Kontum Province. Their mission was to deny enemy access to Kontum City, to destroy Viet Cong infrastructure and to reinforce ARVN forces as require. Additionally, they were to provide security for Hwy 14 north and Hwy 512 (Kontum to Ben Het) and conduct civil affairs operations.

1970 Operation Hines continued with Phase III beginning April 15. The Division's area of operations now consisted of only Binh Dinh Province (1,800 square miles) as compared to the Division AO of 1969 (9,000 square miles). Primary mission was still interdiction of enemy forces trying to infiltrate the AO.

OIF: 2003

The Division completes the first leg of their movement from Kuwait into Iraq to an assembly area 10 kilometers south of Baghdad. At 5:00 p.m. on April 15, lead elements of the Division began movement into Baghdad and approached their first objective—a canal near the Taji airfield. On April 17, the Division began their attack on Taji airfield, which was quickly followed by their next target—the Balad airfield, then it was on to Tikrit. By April 20 the Division's tactical operations center arrived in Tikrit.



Relaxing

A walking arsenal, Sgt. Willis Cochrun, Columbus, Ohio, of the 4th Infantry Division, sports two or more pistols, two knives, and assorted implements of war on his person.

“They won’t catch me short of anything,” said Cochrun. He has just helped in the taking of Rothenburg, Germany, and pauses for a rest before leaving the city.

(U.S. Army photo courtesy of 4th Inf. Div. museum)